

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1           1. A method for accessing an anatomic space having a wall with an  
2 outer surface, said method comprising:

3                 embedding a distal end of an access tube into the outer surface; and  
4                 introducing an access device through the access tube, penetrating the wall  
5 and into the anatomic space while the access tube stabilizes the wall.

1           2. A method as in claim 1, wherein embedding comprises engaging  
2 an anchor structure at the distal end of the access tube against the outer surface and  
3 deploying the anchor structure into said surface.

1           3. A method as in claim 2, wherein the anchor structure comprises  
2 one or more penetrating points.

1           4. A method as in claim 3, wherein the penetrating points are  
2 deployed by rotating the access tube about its central axis to cause the penetrating points  
3 to penetrate into and capture the wall.

1           5. A method as in claim 4, further comprising drawing the access tube  
2 proximally to raise the wall over the anatomic space.

1           6. A method as in claim 1, wherein introducing comprising  
2 positioning a needle in the access tube and passing the needle through the wall and into  
3 the anatomic space.

1           7. A method as in claim 6, further comprising positioning a guidewire  
2 through the needle after said needle has been passed into the anatomic space.

1           8. A method for accessing the pericardial space between the visceral  
2 and parietal pericardium, said method comprising:

3                 percutaneously positioning a distal end of an access tube over the parietal  
4 pericardium;

5                 embedding the distal end of the access tube into the parietal pericardium  
6 but not into the visceral pericardium;

7                 proximally drawing on the access tube to separate the parietal pericardium  
8 from the visceral pericardium to enlarge the pericardial space therebetween; and

9                   penetrating an access device through the access tube and parietal  
10 pericardium and into the pericardial space.

1                   9.       A method as in claim 8, wherein percutaneously positioning the  
2 distal end of the access tube comprises passing the access tube deep to the xiphoid  
3 process.

1                   10.      A method as in claim 8, wherein penetrating comprises positioning  
2 a needle in the access tube and passing the needle into the pericardial space.

1                   11.      A method as in claim 10, further comprising positioning a  
2 guidewire through the needle after said needle has been passed into the pericardial space.

1                   12.      A method as in claim 8 wherein embedding comprises engaging an  
2 anchor structure at the distal end of the access tube against the parietal pericardium and  
3 deploying the anchor structure into said parietal pericardium.

1                   13.      A method as in claim 12, wherein the anchor structure comprises  
2 one or more penetrating points.

1                   14.      A method as in claim 13, wherein the penetrating points are  
2 deployed by rotating the access tube about the long axis to cause the penetrating points to  
3 penetrate into and capture the parietal pericardium.

1                   15.      A method as in claim 8, further comprising drawing the access tube  
2 to separate the parietal pericardium over the pericardial space.

1                   16.      A system for accessing an anatomic space having a wall with an  
2 outer surface, said system comprising:

3                   an access tube having a distal end which can be selectively embedded into  
4 tissue; and

5                   a needle having a lumen therethrough, said needle being configured to pass  
6 through the access tube and penetrate into the anatomic space when the access tube is  
7 embedded into the anatomic space wall.

1                   17.      A system as in claim 16, wherein the access tube includes an  
2 anchor structure at its distal end.

1           18. A system as in claim 17, wherein the anchor structure comprises  
2 one or more penetrating points.

1           19. A system as in claim 18, wherein the penetrating points are  
2 inclined so that they penetrate into tissue when the access tube is rotated about its long  
3 axis.

1           20. A system as in claim 16, further comprising a guidewire configured  
2 to be positioned into the anatomic space through the needle.

1           21. A kit for accessing the pericardial space between the visceral and  
2 parietal pericardium, said kit comprising:  
3           an access tube having a distal end which can be selectively embedded into  
4 tissue; and  
5           instructions for use setting forth a method as in claim 1.